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ABSTRACT

This paper indicates the benefits obtained when child care center staff use a daily log to record the activities of infants in care. Designed to provide parents with information about their child's activities, the log consists of entries such as time of feedings, food consumed, diaper changes, stimulation, play, sleep periods, crying periods, and any other activities considered to be of significance to the welfare of the child. Among several benefits indicated, it is noted that use of the daily log helps to increase the amount of time spent on stimulation activities while insuring that essential physical needs of the child are not neglected. A sample copy of a log sheet is included in the paper. (Author/RH)

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TITLE: The Daily Log: A System of Communication Between Home and Child Care Center

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Abstract

The daily log is a system for increasing effective communication between child care-providers and parents of young children in infant/toddler child care centers. It was developed at the Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Infant/Toddler Center of the Child Development Laboratories and has been implemented in both private and public infant/toddler child care centers.

The daily log is a concise communication system for transmitting information about the child's daily activities prior to arrival at the center and activities while at the center. The purposes of the daily log are threefold: (1) it is a concise yet complete record of the child's daily activities for parents and care-providers; (2) it is a daily focused communication about the child and his activities; and (3) it is a permanent record of each child's daily activities for staff to utilize.

The Daily Log: A System of Communication Between
Home and Child Care Center

"Elissa rolled over today, she hasn't done that before, how thrilling!" "It helps so much to know what happened to Joel today." "I'm glad to see Aaron had a chance to go outside, I'll bet he liked it." These are typical comments expressed by parents of infants and toddlers in the Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Infant/Toddler Center of the Child Development Laboratories. They are responding to what has become known as the daily log, a system which provides them with immediate feedback about their child's activities in the center while they are away from the child during the day.

The daily log was developed primarily as a tool for providing communication between parent and care-provider.¹ The basic assumption underlying its inception was the belief that effective communication is necessary in bridging the gap between home care and center care. It is believed that the daily log provides a bond between parent and care-provider and assists in providing continuity of care between home and center.

The daily log as presented below can either be adopted as is, or adapted to fit individual needs. The example illustrates how the daily log typically looks.

¹The daily log was developed by Dr. Jacquie Eddleman, Assistant Professor, Division of Human Development, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

Daily Log Infant Care

Infant's Name: Heath

Caregivers' Names: Cathy

and

Date: 2-22-80

Time Arrived: 7:55

When was she/he last fed: last night

When did she/he last sleep: 7:00

Any special instructions for the day:

Time	Feedings	Sleep	Diaper Ch.		Stimulation Play Name and Describe	Ex. Out	Comments
	Bottle/Solid/Water		BM	Urine			
7:45 AM	2 bowls of Buc Wheat				He recognized sounds on the tape recorder. For toilet flushing he said "Kyle going potty."		Heath was really hungry today - 2 bowls of cereal!
8:00 AM	Cereal with milk				He liked the sewing machine sound. He talked into the recorder but I don't think he understood it was his voice he was hearing.		He noticed that Big Bird was gone & asked what happened to it. I hadn't even noticed it was gone. Mary
8:15 AM							
8:30 AM							
8:45 AM							
9:00 AM							
9:15 AM							We went for a walk outside. He found a leaf to take back.
9:30 AM							He stood behind the bike rack and enjoyed looking through the bars. He put a gumdrop (from tree outside) in the jack-in-the-box and let it pop out. Paula
9:45 AM							
10:00 AM	5oz. Apple Juice			✓			
10:15 AM							
10:30 AM							
10:45 AM					Heath was making baby animal sounds while putting a puzzle together.		
11:00 AM	2 Tbsp. of Polish Sausage						
11:15 AM	1 1/2 Tbsp. cabbage and carrots						
11:30 AM	1 Tbsp. fruit salad						
11:45 AM	1/4 piece bread						
12:00 AM	1/2 glass of milk						
12:15 AM	(He loved the sausage)				Heath and I sat up chairs like a train. He wanted to be the Conductor.		He didn't like the oranges in his fruit salad for lunch. Cathy

Purposes of the Daily Log

The daily log has three primary purposes. First, it is a concise yet complete record of the child's daily activities for parents and care-providers. Second, it is a daily focused communication between parents and care-providers about the child and his activities. And third, it is a permanent record of each child's daily activities for center staff to utilize.

Concise complete record for parents and care-providers

The daily log is designed to provide parents with information about their child's activities while in the care of center staff. This is accomplished by noting time of feedings, diaper changes, stimulation play, sleep periods, crying periods, and any other activities considered to be of significance to the welfare of the child. The parent can quickly and easily see not only when these activities occurred but also the important ingredients of each activity.

Of particular interest to parents are types and amounts of food the child consumed during the day. This information is recorded on the log and aids the parent in making decisions about choices of foods for the child at home. It also reassures parents that special directions, such as a physician's prescribed feeding schedule, are being adhered to at the center.

Another by-product of the daily log is information the parent receives about stimulation activities in which the child has participated during the day. Since parents at the center are strongly encouraged to engage in stimulation activities with their child at home, inclusion of this information on the daily log provides concrete guidance for continuation of these activities when away from the center.

All interactions between the child and care-providers are recorded and communicated to parents. Since the center has multiple care-providers, the daily log assists each care-provider in relaying important information to parents. Without this record only interactions peculiar to a particular care-provider would likely be relayed to parents.

This type of record keeping assures that any care-provider can quickly and easily see precisely when an activity occurred with a particular child. It is particularly beneficial in light of the fact that much of infant/toddler caregiving includes custodial tasks often to the neglect of stimulation activities. The daily log helps to increase the amount of time spent on stimulation activities while at the same time insuring that essential physical needs of the child are not neglected.

In addition, the daily log provides feedback to the parent who neither delivers nor picks up the child from the center. It often helps to ease guilt feelings of parents who must be away from their very young children during the day.

Daily, focused communication between parents and care-providers

Many times the only contact care-providers of the day care center have with parents is during the brief periods in which children are delivered to and picked up from the center. During these times much critical information can be transmitted between parents and care-providers at the center. The daily log essentially guarantees a focused conversation about the child and his activities. When the care-provider receives the child, parents record when the infant was last fed and when he/she last slept and any special instructions for that day. Again, when the child is picked up by the parent at the end

of the day, the daily log is given to the parent and conversation is focused on the child's activities, while unrelated conversation is minimized.

This system of focused communication inherently encourages conversation between parent and care-provider. It assists the care-provider in recalling significant events during the day. It is an efficient means of transmitting useful information to parents and often leads to indepth conversations with parents about developmental sequences, methods of managing children, and other topics of concern.

Permanent record of child's activities

While parents receive the original copy of the daily log each day, the center retains the carbon copy in each child's permanent folder. These copies are readily available to all staff members for easy referral. They are frequently used to determine which stimulation activities are being used, which stage of development the child has reached, and any particular needs the child might have. Furthermore, information is available to make appropriate decisions about each child on a long-term basis.

Summary

The daily log appears to be mutually beneficial to parents, children, and care-providers. It provides parents with an accurate and current record of their child's activities. It provides them with immediate feedback about their child, an important ingredient in strengthening the bond between parent and child. It increases parental confidence by easing guilt feelings that are often present when parents have to be away from very young children. It provides the parent who has no direct contact with the center with specific information about the child's daily activities. It is often used by parents

to increase their own communication with their children since questions and comments are often generated as a result of reading the daily log. Finally, it often encourages repetition and reinforcement of stimulation activities at home.

Second, the daily log is equally beneficial to care-providers. It provides an accurate record for making decisions which affect the child. It maximizes proper feeding, frequent diapering, and appropriate attention to the developmental needs of children. It assures accurate feedback about the child to the parent. It encourages interaction with all children in a positive manner. It enhances the care-provider's confidence in planning and implementing activities for the child.

Finally, the daily log is probably of greatest benefit to the child. It helps to assure proper, accurate and consistent care. It establishes a bond between the important care-providers in the child's life and assures continual communication between these persons. In the final analysis, it is the child who is best served.